

*The REDEEMER'S Ability to save
Sinners to the uttermost, illustrated,* —

IN TWO
S E R M O N S,

PREACHED IN THE
TOLBOOTH-CHURCH of EDINBURGH,

AT THE
CELEBRATION of the SACRAMENT

OF THE
L O R D's S U P P E R;

MARCH 1755.

By THOMAS BOSTON Minister at OXNAM.

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Dear Friends - Please accept our hearty congratulations on the birth of your son, and our best wishes for his welfare. We are sending you a copy of the "Bible for Boys" and a copy of "The Story of the World" for your son. We hope you will find them useful and interesting.

M.D.C.S.Y.

The REDEEMER'S Ability to save
Sinners to the uttermost, illustrated.

S E R M O N I.

Saturday, March 15th 1755.

HEBREWS vii. 25.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him.

IN the preceeding part of this chapter, the apostle demonstrates the excellency of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, by comparing it, first, with the priesthood of *Melchisedec*, and next with the priesthood of *Aaron*. In the text and downwards, he applies this doctrine to the use of the church, shewing us what we may reasonably look for and expect from such a glorious High Priest, and that is, no less than full and compleat salvation; *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, &c.* In which words, three things are observable.

1. A saving power ascribed to Jesus Christ, *Wherefore he is able also to save.* But the ability here ascribed unto him, is not an ability of *nature* but of *office*. The apostle does not describe what he is able to do considered absolutely as God, but what he is able to do in the character of High Priest of the church, or Mediator of the new covenant. Now, this would be carefully

adverted unto ; for whereas Christ our Mediator has undertaken certain offices for us, all that, as such, he can do in us, or for us, must be within the bounds of these offices, and in the discharge of them. Suppose a rich and powerful man was also a judge, 'tis one thing what he can do by the dint of wealth and power, and another thing what he can do as a judge ; and had we a cause depending before him, we should expect nothing from him but what he is able to do in the faithful discharge of his office. It is then the *office, power and authority* of Jesus Christ that's here intended ; in the discharge thereof, he is able, fit and meet to save sinners. The same word is used, chapter ii. 18. and implies a fitness, a readiness and inclination, as well as power to succour and save.

2. The extent of this power, *he is able to save to the uttermost*. The phrase may imply two things, (1.) The perfection of this salvation. Christ does not save in part, or by halves, but most compleatly and perfectly. *He is the rock, and his work is perfect ; he is the author and finisher of our faith.* In whomsoever he begins the good work, in them also he carries it on, and finishes it, maugre all opposition (a). Christ's salvation is not only a deliverance from evil, but there is in it a confluence and accumulation of all blessings. He not only brings them out of prison, having, as Surety for them, paid all their debt, but he brings them out of prison to reign. To the same purpose, *Paul tells the Thessalonians, For God hath not appointed us to wrath* : and is not even this a mighty matter, considering how richly we deserved it to the uttermost ? Yea, but he has done still greater and kinder things for us,

(a) Deut. xxxii. 4. Heb. xii. 2. Philip. i. 6.

as he has appointed us to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ (b). (2.) The perpetuity of this salvation. Christ is able, in the exercise of his office mediatorial, to save to the uttermost of time, and to eternity. *Joshua, Othniel, Ehud,* and others mentioned in scripture, were petty temporary saviours ; they saved only the outward man, and the appurtenances thereof : nor was that same salvation perpetual ; for in the sacred history we find, that after the death of those men, the people fell again under the power of their enemies, and were opprest by them, until God raised up other deliverers for them. The Heathens applied the title of *saviour* to their chief god : most justly is it applied to the Son of God ; his name is called *Jesus*, for he saves his people, and that compleatly, both as to the parts and duration of their salvation.

3. The objects of this power, *viz. Them that come unto God by him.* He does not save all absolutely, but all that come unto God by him. Coming unto God is sometimes put for faith, *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden* (c). Sometimes 'tis meant of worship ; the apostle calls those who worshipped God in the ordinances of the old law, *the comers in heretomo* (d) ; not those that come to the worship at the tabernacle or temple, but those who by that worship came to God. The point intended is, that there is no safe, no successful dealing with God but by Jesus Christ. If we presume to come to God, without taking notice of Jesus the Mediator, we offer the highest affront and indignity both to the Father and to the Son ; and we forfeit salvation, because we act in direct contradiction to the me-

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(b) 1 Thess. v. 9. (c) Mat. xi. 28. (d) Heb x. 1.

thod laid down in infinite wisdom for obtaining it.

In discoursing farther on this subject, I would, through divine assistance, endeavour to illustrate and confirm two points of great consequence, which the text seems to contain. The first is, *That mankind sinners can have no safe nor successful dealing with God, but by Jesus Christ.* The second is, *That Jesus Christ, in the exercise of his mediatory office, is able to save unto the uttermost all that deal with God by him.*

'Tis the distinguishing glory of Christianity, that it clearly points out unto us the one *Mediator betwixt God and Man, the man Christ Jesus.* However, the necessity of a mediator in general, i. e. of one to interpose 'twixt the supreme Being and mortal men, seems to be an article of natural religion. The antient Heathens were sensible that an immediate approach unto the Deity was improper for them, or rather presumptuous: hence they had many inferior deities or dæmons, whom they supposed to be mediators 'twixt them and the supreme Being *. And it may be considered

* To this purpose, *Plato* says, *The deity is not approached by men, but all the intercourse and commerce 'twixt God and men is performed by the mediation of dæmons.* These dæmons were men deified or canonized after death. Among the ancient heathens, these who had invented any useful art, who had delivered their country, or performed any remarkable achievement, were, after their death, enrolled among their deities, & had divine honours paid to them, as mediators 'twixt the supreme God and mortal men. The devil plays the same game still in the antichristian synogogue, to which the apostle is supposed to have a view in 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2. See the learned Mede's *apostasy of the latter times.*

dered as a piece of the wisdom of providence, that such a notion obtained among them, since it would facilitate their reception of the Christian religion, of which the most important article, yea, the very life and soul, is the interposition of the Son of God, as a Mediator 'twixt an offended God and a guilty world.

But to illustrate the FIRST thing proposed :-- our whole dealing with God may be reduced into two articles, viz. *Our receiving from him in One way of mercy, and our returning something to him in a way of duty.* Now, I'll endeavour to show, that there is no dealing with God either of these ways but by Jesus Christ.

First. We can receive nothing from God in the way of mercy but by Jesus Christ ; for God out of Christ is a consuming fire. People may receive mercies from God, and yet not receive them in the way of mercy ; they may be conveyed only through the channel of common providence, not through the channel of the new covenant : and this manner of conveyance turns blessings into curses, and mercies into miseries. The *Israelites* in the wilderness asked flesh to eat very passionately ; God granted them their request, but not in mercy ; for while he gave them flesh to eat, he sent leanness into their souls ; and while the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fittest of them (e).

But covenant mercies, sanctifying and saving mercies, we cannot receive from God, but by Jesus Christ. More particularly,

1. We can have no pardon of sin, but by Jesus Christ. Hence *Paul* says, *Through this man is* *preached* *(c.) Psal. lxxviii. 30. 31.*

preached unto you, the forgiveness of sins (f). And in another place, *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins (g).* One man thinks he shall obtain pardon of sin for his repentance; another pretends to merit by his good works, or the penances he undergoes. But the only sensible and prevailing argument that a guilty sinner can urge for pardon before God, is the blood of Christ, shed for the remission of sins. *For thy name's sake pardon mine iniquity (h),* says *David.* Now God's name is in Christ; therefore speaking of him to old *Israel,* he says, *Beware of him, and provoke him not, for my name is in him (i).* Pardon of sin is a leading mercy, a such blessing; it is God's prerogative to give it, it is Christ's prerogative to have purchased it, and, according to the stated and declar'd method of the gospel, it is impossible for us to receive it from God, but through Jesus Christ, and for his sake. Our long account to justice and the law must be cancelled, and cross-scored with the red lines of the Redeemer's blood, before we can obtain a discharge from the Father's hand.

2. We can have no acceptance of our persons, but by Jesus Christ. Accordingly the apostle informs us, that *God hath made us accepted in the Beloved (k).* It is said of *Abel,* *God had respect unto Abel, and unto his offering (l).* First, He had respect unto Abel's person, he was accepted as righteous in his sight, on the account of the Messiah's imputed righteousness, which the man had received by faith: and next, He had respect unto his offering, as the offering of a justified person, of a person in good terms with God. Our persons

(f) *Acts xiii. 38.* (g) *Col. i. 14.* (h) *Psal. xxv. 11.* (i) *Exod. xxii. 21.* (k) *Eph. i. 6.* (l) *Gen. iv. 4.*

are lothsome and abominable in the sight of a holy God ; a deep sense of this makes the church cry out, *We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags* (*m*). But the person of the Son, God-man, is most acceptable unto the Father : he is the *Beloved* by way of eminency ; he is the first recipient subject of the love of God, and from him it is darted upon us, like rays of light from the sun.

3. We cannot have adoption into the family of God, but by Jesus Christ : *For God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons* (*n*). Adoption is the translation of a child from one family into another, and investing that child with the rights and privileges thereof. Now, our Redeemer became the son of man, that we might become the sons of God ; he came of the family of *Adam*, to bring us into the family of God ; he took our nature upon him, was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and in that nature made full atonement for our sins. Hence the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ can with all safety to his honour, receive us into the adoption of sons.

4. We can have no communications of grace from God at any time, but by Jesus Christ. Our standing is by grace ; yet, we have no access into the least supply of this grace wherein we stand, but by him. Hence *Paul* saith, *By whom also* (*viz.* Jesus Christ mentioned in the immediately preceeding verse) *we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand* (*o*). All the habits

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(*m*) *Isaiah* lxiv. 6. (*n*) *Gal.* iv. 4, 5. (*o*) *Rom.* v. 2.

and principles of grace, which believers are made partakers of in regeneration, are conveyed to them through him : all the present, immediate, actual supplies of grace in light, life, comfort and joy, which they receive in the progress of the christian life, come through him only : as God sends his rain to us through the clouds, and his light to us through the sun ; so the first grace we receive, and all the after supplies of grace, come to us as so many rays or beams darted from the sun of Righteousness Jesus Christ.

5. We cannot have heaven and eternal life but by Jesus Christ. *For the wages of sin is death : but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord (p).* It is the death and sufferings of Christ, that open the gates of paradise to any of the family of the first *Adam*. We have forfeited the inheritance by our folly : Christ has restored the forfeiture to us, so that we are admitted unto heaven, and have boldnes to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, while the sinning angels are cast down to hell.

Secondly, We can return nothing to God in a way of duty but by Jesus Christ. The apostle *Paul* understood this well, when he exhorts the *Colossians*, *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (q).* Now the whole of our Duty to God, may be comprehended in these three, *faith, worship, and obedience* ; none of which can be donee acceptably but by Jesus Christ.

1. There is no believing in God, but by Jesus Christ. Agreeable to this, the apostle *Peter* saith, *who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory (r).*

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(p) Rom. vi. 23. (q) Col. iii. 17. (r) 1 Pet. i. 21.

There is no trusting in God, no loving him, no delighting in him, until once we apprehend him as our God, reconciled unto us through the blood of the cross. No person who has not believed in Christ, can say the first clause of what is commonly called *the apostles creed*, without a lie, *I believe in God the Father Almighty*. A man out of Christ, may believe there is a God; and so do the devils, they *believe and tremble* (f): But no man out of Christ can believe in God, or rest his soul upon him with hope and confidence for salvation; because God, out of Christ, is a consuming fire. Let none then deceive themselves, by trusting in the general mercy of God; for although he be merciful in his nature, yet there is no manifestation of that mercy to the children of men, nor can they be made partakers of it unto salvation, but by Jesus Christ.

2. There is no worshipping of God but by Jesus Christ. Our prayers and praises, and all our religious duties must be put into Christ's hands, that he may perfume them with the incense of his intercession, and so present them acceptable unto his Father. He is the *Angel who came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne* (t). It would be thought a very indecent and presumptuous thing for any of us to rush into the presence of the king, without taking notice of those whose office it is to introduce people unto him. And can we imagine a greater presumption, or a higher provocation to heaven, than for a guilty sinner to rush into the presence of the great God,

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(f) James ii. 19. (t) Rev. viii. 3.

and address him, without taking notice of his only Son Jesus Christ, whom he has appointed Mediator, and through whom alone it is that he will have any friendly communication with us?

3. There is no yielding obedience to God, but by Jesus Christ: therefore, *Whatsoever we do in word or deed, we must do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.* We must put all our good works as well as our worship into Christ's hand, that he may remove the iniquity and imperfection attending them, and render them acceptable unto his Father. And oh, what a huge difference is there betwixt the saints best works and purest services, as they go out of their hands into Christ's, and as they go out of Christ's hands into God's! Hence saints, at the day of judgment, are represented as not knowing their good works when they meet them, they are so much changed from what they were, as they came from them; *Lord, (say they) when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? (u)*

The SECOND point to be confirmed and illustrate, is, That Jesus Christ, in the exercise of his mediatory office, is able to save unto the uttermost all that deal with God by him.

In order to this, I offer the following considerations.

1st, Jesus Christ our Mediator is very and eternal God, *God over all, blessed for ever (x).* It is one of the prophetic names given him, *The mighty God (y).* *Therefore he is mighty to save*

(u) Mat. xxv. 37, 38. (x) Rom. ix. 5.
(y) Isaiah ix. 6.

save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. The Godhead of the Son shines most brightly in the new testament, particularly in the first chapter of John's gospel, in the second chapter to the Philippians, in the first to the Colossians, and in the first to the Hebrews. This is a principle of the highest importance in the Christian scheme, it is the very base and centre of it, and the great bulwark of faith evangelical; for was he only a secondary Deity, a God by deputation, our worship of him would be idolatry, and our faith in him vanity and a lie. Oh then what an execrable attempt must it be, to depose the Son of God from his Divinity, and to sink the very and eternal God into the rank of a mere creature! But let not the friends of Jesus be discouraged; the Father will avenge the quarrel of his Son, and the Son is well able to vindicate his own cause. *The truth is great, and will prevail, it will live, and reign, and flourish over the graves of those who conspired to bear it down.*

Know Christian, and be well assured of it, that *the fulness of the Godhead dwells in thy dearest Redeemer*. His life is the life of *the Prince of life*, and his blood is *the blood of God*; therefore, he is well able to make an atonement for sin, to conquer Satan, to overcome death and hell, and all the enemies of our salvation. What would baffle and confound the united wisdom and power both of angels and men, is perfectly easy to him who is *the mighty God*.

2dly, He is really and truly man. The Son of God is also *the man Christ Jesus*. The prophet Zechariah calls him *the man whose name is the Branch (z)*, and *the man God's fellow (a)*. Man-kind

(z) Zech. vi. 12. (a) Zech. xiii. 7.

kind were not to be saved by absolute uncontrollable omnipotence, but by power exerted in a way of righteousness, wisdom and grace. A man cannot do what he cannot *lawfully* do; so though God be omnipotent, yet he neither can nor will do what is inconsistent with the eternal rectitude of his nature. Now sin could not be pardoned without an adequate satisfaction; therefore he who substitutes himself in the room of sinners, must suffer and die; and if God the Son condescends to this, he must become man, *a body must be prepared for him*. He needed not to have a heart prepared him, his heart was prepared from all eternity; but he wanted a body, a suit of flesh and blood, such as the divine nature never wore before: and God himself was at the whole cost of making it.

3dly, The divine and human natures are united in his one Person; for there is but *One Mediator betwixt God and man* (b). And hence, it is not the divine nature that is the Mediator, properly speaking, nor yet is it the human nature; but the divine Person of the Son, in whom these two natures are united, is the Mediator, and what is done by either nature is reckoned the deed of the person.

He was to reconcile contending parties, therefore he had a hand to lay, as it were, upon each of them: he was to reconcile heaven and earth, therefore he took pledges out of both: he brought the highest nature out of heaven, the divine; and he assumed the highest nature upon earth, the human. Had he not been God, he could not have dealt with God for us, nor brought us unto God. Had he not been man also, we could not had

had any intercourse with him ; we could neither have seen him nor heard him. We could not have seen him ; for God is invisible, he is hid from us, and, what is very surprising, he is hid with *light*, which discovers and manifests things. If we look straight to the sun, we are struck blind, and can see nothing at all : so, if we look to the divine Essence, the very light of it strikes us blind ; but the rays of it are refracted and broken by the human nature which is like a back to the Godhead.

Had he not been man, neither could we have heard him. Did God speak immediately unto us, he would speak us dead at the first word : therefore said the *Israelites* to *Moses*, when God spoke from mount *Sinai*, *Speak thou unto us, and we will bear thee, but let not God speak any more to us, lest we die* (c). But what shall become of them after *Moses* is dead and gone ? who will speak to them then ? *Moses* tells them, *A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you*, &c. (d). And the man Christ Jesus is that prophet.

4thly, The mediatory office consists of three parts or degrees, that it may answer to the uttermost all the exigencies of a lost world. Christ, as Mediator, exercises the office of *a prophet, of a priest, and of a king*. And whatsoever he does for us, in us, or upon us, from first to last ; all the relations he stands in to us, and all that we can ask or expect from him, may be reduced to one or other of these offices ; the which might be shown by an induction of particulars. In fine, I may challenge any in this assembly, saint or sinner, to name but one thing necessary to compleat

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(c) Exod. xx. 19. (d) Deut. xviii. 15.

our salvation, that lyes not within the compas of these offices.

The *Jewish* church and nation were managed by prophets, priests, and kings ; these distinct offices were vested in different persons : But now they are all committed to the Person of the Son our Mediator, and in a more full and ample manner than ever they were, or could be to any other person, he being God, as well as man. The whole counsel of God is trusted with him ; therefore none so fit to teach as he : he had the blood of God to offer on the altar of the cross ; therefore none so fit to be a priest as he : and all power in heaven and in earth is committed unto him ; therefore none so fit to rule and govern as he.

5thly, This office in its several parts is the contrivance of infinite unerring wisdom for the salvation of sinners. Hence Christ crucified is called *the wisdom of God* (e). Now was there any one thing necessary to the salvation foresaid, that is not seen to, and provided for, in some part or other of the mediatory office ; it would be a reflection upon that infinite wisdom which laid the whole plan. Therefore we must either admit, that Jesus Christ, in the exercise of his office, is able to save to the uttermost, or we cast the reproach of folly upon God's infinite wisdom, and say in effect, That he has not suited the means unto the end : and we say of Christ, as the people said of Saul, *How shall this man save us* (f) ? and we despise him in our hearts.

The best laid projects of men often fail, because the wisest among them are shallow and short-sighted. But when infinite wisdom, power and

(e) 1 Cor. i. 24. (f) Sam. x. 27.

and love act in concert, can we suppose any thing so difficult, as that they won't be able to effectuate it? No surely. Right reason, my brethren, as well as faith; commands us to believe, that the means which God only wise chooses will certainly obtain the end, even though we could see no natural connexion betwixt them, but rather a contradiction, as in the case of anointing the blind man's eyes with clay and spittle to make him see. But this is not the case in the mediatorial scheme; its sufficiency and suitableness to the salvation of sinners are obvious in every respect; the means here work towards the end, in a plain, easy and accountable manner.

61bly, God the Father called his Son unto the office, which we may be sure he would not done, had he not been fully able to discharge it. Men may, and often do, put such into office as are very unfit for it; sometimes they're so unfaithful as to do it; and sometimes they're so unskilful as to do it. But our Mediator was neither chosen nor called to his *office, power and authority*, by men; he who called him is the only wise God, and the God of truth: *Then thou speakest in vision to thy holy One*, (Heb. concerning thy holy One) *and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people* (g). The speaker here is God the Father; the person spoken of, or to, is God the Son, he is the holy One: this epithet exactly agrees to him, and to none but him: hence in the new testament, he's called, *the holy Child Jesus* (b).

Tis well known what a shattered and melancholy condition the affairs of the *Israelitish nation*

(g) Psal. lxxxix. 19. (b) Acts iv. 27.

on were in, when God called *David* to the government, who is the type here, tho' *David's* Son and Lord be the antitype. *Saul* was slain, *Jonathan* was slain, the people were routed by the *Philistines*, their religion and policy were both going to wreck; why then, God enabled one from among the people, even *David*, a man well fitted for government, a man truly qualified for recovering the credit of his countrymen, who were, at that time, sunk under the power of their own vices, and their enemies valour. Now see how well this agrees to the antitype. When the affairs of mankind were brought into a ruinous condition by *Adam's* fall, and when *Satan*, like the uncircumcised *Philistine*, was triumphing over elect stones lying in rubbish, then, even then, did God, in the way of sovereign grace, interpose, calling his Son, and constituting him to be the Mediator, the repairer of the breach, and the restorer of human nature.

71bly, God the Father likewise anointed him to the office with the unction of the holy Spirit. Hence the apostle says, *Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows* (i). The anointing under the law to the offices of prophet, priest and king, was a rite of investiture, and likewise a symbol and pledge of the person's being endued with proper qualifications for the discharge of the office conferred upon him. Jesus Christ, upon his instalment into the office of Mediator, received not the Spirit in measure, but in infinite fulness; so that he's well qualified to go through all the parts of it, to the honour of God, and to the comfort of all those for whom he undertook it.

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(i) Heb. i. 9.

This was prophesied of by *Isaiah*, chap. xlii. 1. *Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him. And ver. 5. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee.*

Besides the abilities which the Son himself was possess of, we see the Father promises to stand by him, and support him, in the whole of his undertaking; and the Spirit of God rests upon him. In very deed, 'tis impossible the mediatory plan can misgive, or fail in any part; for the wisdom and power of a whole Trinity are united to make it effectual. The Father anoints, the Son is the anointed, and the holy Ghost is the *unction*.

Lastly, The Son formally accepted the office and undertook it, which he would not done, had he not been well qualified for the same; and he still continues in the faithful discharge of it. We have an extract of this acceptance under the hand and seal of the holy Ghost, in these words, *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou bored—Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy Will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart (k).* Men may, and oftentimes do, undertake offices for which they are extremely unfit; but we may be sure, the Son of God would never undertaken the office of our Mediator, had he not been able to save to the uttermost, *Moreover he continueth for ever, and hath an unchangeable priesthood.* The priests of the order of *Aaron* were not suffered to continue by reason of death (l); and their office past from one to

(k) *Psal. xl. 6, 7, 8.* (l) *Heb. vii. 23, 24.*

another in a succession : but Jesus Christ never resigns his office to another, he has no vicars nor successors, but continues in the exercise of it in heaven, for the application of what he purchased on earth, by the sacrifice of himself. 'Tis very true, our high Priest died ; but then, his death was not a ceasing from his office, as was the death of the *Aaronical* priests ; nay, it was the principal part of it, the complement and perfection of it : so that Christ dead on the cross, and buried in the grave, was even then the high Priest of the church, and the Mediator 'twixt God and man.

Now, let us bring all these considerations under one view ; let us sum up the evidence, and see what it amounts to :—Here then, is God and man, and this God and man in one person ;—the parts of the mediatory office are adapted to all the circumstances of sinners ;—the office itself is the contrivance of infinite wisdom ;—the Father called the Son to it, furnished him fully for it ;—and himself voluntarily undertook it : therefore, in the discharge of it, *he's able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him* : which was the point to be demonstrated.

I proceed now to some practical improvement of this subject.

Is there no safe, no successful dealing with God, but by Jesus Christ ? this condemns those who deal with God any other way than by Jesus Christ ; or who, in any of their dealings with God, neglect and overlook the one and only Mediator. And here, three sorts of persons fall under the severest censure.

1. Those who go to God by angels, and saints, departed, as the *Papists* do, supposing them to be

be mediators of intercession for them: but in what part of holy scripture do we find the angels vested with any part of the mediatory office? ministering spirits they are indeed, *sent forth to minister unto the heirs of salvation* (m); but mediators, either of reconciliation or intercession, they are no where said to be.

They suppose likewise, that the saints in heaven, having past through the condition of saints on earth, sympathize with them more naturally, and to a higher degree, than Jesus Christ can do, and so are fitter to intercede for them: but what a monstrous supposition is this, that there should be more sympathy in any breast than in the breast of the tender-hearted Jesus, who is afflicted in all the afflictions of his people? Nay, my brethren, I dare boldly say, that were all the kindness, sympathy and compassion that's among all the angels, and all the saints both in heaven and earth collected into, and centered in one breast, it would be, when compared with what's in the breast of Jesus, like a drop of water to the main ocean. But why do I speak thus? a drop of water bears some proportion to the main ocean, even as the smallest part bears some proportion to the whole, of which it is a part: whereas there is no proportion 'twixt finite and infinite.

2. Those who go to God with their doings or sufferings, thinking to merit by them at his hand, Some are of such a legal spirit, that they never perform any duty, but they presently mark God their debtor for it, and are ready, like the Jews, to upbraid him with their services, saying, *Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest*

Knowledge (n)? The most abominable creature that can come to a throne of grace is a proud boaster, who in effect says to God, Here is my repentance, where is thy pardon? here is my work, where is thy reward? give me the wages which I have earned. Besides the absurdity of a creature's meriting at the hand of the Creator to whom it owes all it is, has, or can do; the supposition of it puts an affront upon the Son of God, as if his merit were not sufficient: 'tis no less than an attempt to *eik* and patch up that glorious robe of righteousness woven out of the blood and bowels of the Redeemer, as if it were a torn and imperfect thing.

3. Those who go to God in the way of uncovenanted mercy. Thus many ignorant people, if ye ask them when they're sick and dying, what is the foundation of your hopes for eternal life? they'll tell you, they trust in his mercies: but they don't advert, that Christ's blood is the only channel thro' which mercy can flow to sinners, and that, out of Christ, God is a consuming fire. The proper object of God's mercy is not every miserable sinner; for then, the fallen angels would be the objects of it no less than we, as they're both sinful and miserable. But according to the economy of grace, the proper, compleat and adequate object of divine mercy, is a miserable sinner of mankind coming to God through Christ, in the way of faith, repentance, and evangelical obedience.

Is Jesus Christ, in the exercise of his office mediatorial, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him? Then,

I. Let

(n) Isa. lviii. 3.

1. Let us endeavour to be established in the faith of the office, power and authority of Jesus Christ, for the salvation of sinners. When people turn concerned about the state of their souls, they have a general notion that Christ is able to save them ; but they don't so readily consider, that 'tis only in the exercise of his office mediatorial that he either can or will save them. Here then faith should fix itself, namely, that this same office is every way suited to our salvation, and that we may have every thing from Jesus Christ, in the discharge thereof, that is necessary for us.

2. Does he save to the uttermost ? then let us serve him to the uttermost. Let us count nothing too much to do for him, nor any thing too hard to suffer for him, if in providence we are call'd to it. He does not put you off with a half salvation, see that you do not put him off with half duties and services. He not only gave his body for you upon the cross, but there also, he made his soul an offering for your sins : oh then, my brethren ! let not your praying, praising, hearing and communicating, be so many bodily acts, while heart and soul are wanting : this is to bring the torn and the lame for sacrifice, and to present God with a dead carcase instead of a living soul. What would been the fate of the man under the law, who had brought a dead beast to the altar, and said to the priest, Sir, offer that unto God for me ? would not that soul been cut off from the congregation, as a presumptuous profaner of the holy things ? Now, of how much sorcer punishment shall ye be thought worthy, if ye fill the communion-table in this place tomorrow, with so many dead carcases instead of living souls ? O cry, cry earnestly unto our com-

mon friend within the vail, for a plentiful supply of his grace, that your hearts and souls may be engaged and enlarged in the solemn service you have in view.

3. Is he able to save to the uttermost? Here is comfort to saints groaning under remaining corruption: he who has begun the good work in you, is able to carry on and perfect it in spite of all opposition. Don't say, I'll never get this lust subdued, this corruption mortified, this temptation overcome, this affliction born;—my grace, if I have any, grows weaker and weaker, while my corruptions wax stronger and stronger;—I'll fall in the wilderness, I'll never see the promis'd land. Brethren, all this is downright unbelief, 'tis unbelief in its loudest accents. Strange! is not Jesus Christ able to save to the uttermost? is there any thing too hard for the Lord? can he not finish what he hath already begun? cannot he who removed the guilt of sin in your justification, break the power and dominion of it in a progressive work of sanctification? Why ly ye thus upon your faces? up and be doing, for the Lord is with you, and will never leave you nor forsake you. Ye complain of the prevalence of indwelling sin; and so did the great apostle *Paul* while he was in the world. The groans of this man, under a body of sin and death, are sounding in the ears of the Christian church to this very day: *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* My brethren, ye must not imagine that your *old man* will ly quiet like *Isaac* upon the altar, when you put the knife of mortification to his throat; on the contrary, ye may expect strong strugglings, and violent motions, but the issue will certainly

be glorious ; Christ will present you to himself without spot or blemish ; ye shall be more than conquerors through him that loved you. Come forward then unto the table of the Lord, that ye may be strengthened for carrying on the conflict with indwelling sin : 'tis a confirming ordinance, and many who came to it drooping and disengaged, have gone away rejoicing.

4. Is Christ able to save to the uttermost ? Then, here's encouragement to the worst of sinners that are desirous to return unto God thro' Christ. Let none adopt the sentiments of cursed despairing Cain, saying, *Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven* (o). Christ is able to save to the uttermost : mountains of guilt, before his office-power and authority, will become a plain. Nay, suppose you was a greater sinner than any that ever yet was saved, (and this is carrying the matter as high as it can be) you have no cause to

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(o) Gen. iv. 13. This is the marginal reading in our bibles. According to the Hebrew, the verse runs thus. *And Cain said unto JEHOVAH, Great is mine iniquity above lifting up, viz. of the face.* The cursed man hath an eye to what was said to him, of the falling and lifting up of the face, ver. 6, 7. and after a sort retorts it blasphemously. Whose face he meant, he shews ver. 14, tho' he was far from being solicitous to enjoy that face. 'Twas a part of the solemn blessing on the Lord's people, Numb. vi. 26. *JEHOVAH lift up his face upon thee.* Cain says, his iniquity was above that. *Thou bears and bears up all things, higher and lower, but canst not bear mine iniquity ; so Rab. Solomon glosseth it.* See Rob. Thes. in voce *nasa.* The man despairs of pardon, and blasphemes.

despair, unless you could prove, that there was a time when, or a person on whom, Christ's power was exerted to the utmost, so that it could go no further. But this is absurd and impossible. To man, whose power is finite and limited, some things are more easy, and some more difficult, and there are other things which go beyond the utmost degree of his power. On the other hand, 'tis plain, that every thing is equally easy to Omnipotence, and that there are no degrees in Infinity. How great is the difference 'twixt an *ant* and an *angel*? yet to the creation of the former, Omnipotence is necessary; and there's no more necessary to the creation of the latter. The least sinner cannot be saved but by the infinite power of the Redeemer, and the case of the greatest sinner cannot possibly exceed that power; for there's no going beyond Infinity, or controlling Omnipotence.

But possibly, some are saying within themselves, We have heard much of Christ's ability to save; but alas! our strait lyes not there, we never doubted of his ability: our difficulty is about his good-will towards us, we're afraid he'll never look on such vile sinners as we are.

The peevishness and obstinacy of unbelief are amazing, in questioning Christ's willingness to save, after such incontestable evidences thereof as the scripture affords. He counsels you to come to him; *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire* (p). He kindly invites you to come to him, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden* (q). He commands you to come

(p) Rev. iii. 18. (q) Matth. xi. 28.

come to him, *This is his commandment, that ye believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ (r).* He chides with you for your obstinacy in refusing to come to him, and laments over it even unto weeping; *And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life (s).* *And he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace (t).* Yea, he swear by himself, because there is none greater, that he has no pleasure in your destruction; *Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live (u).* And then he keeps up a standing ministry to *compel you to come in, that his house may be filled (v).* From all which 'tis evident, that there's nothing on the part of God, or on the part of Christ, to hinder the greatest sinner to obtain eternal salvation.

Lastly, If Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him;—thence I conclude, he's able to ruin and destroy to the uttermost those who will not come to him. Oh then, sinners! be perswaded to *kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way (x).* This Lamb of God, is likewise the Lion of the tribe of *Judah;*—if ye will not bow before him, *he'll break you with a rod of iron, and dash you in pieces like a potter's vessel.*—He will

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meet

(r) 1 John iii. 23. (s) John v, 40. (t) Luke xix. 41, 42. (u) Ezek. xxxiii. 11. (v) Luke xiv. 23.

(x) Psal. ii. 12.

meet you as a bear bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of your heart, and devour you like a lion. (y).

May God of his infinite mercy awaken you seriously to consider the things which belong to your peace, before they are hid from your eyes.

(y) Hos. xiii. 8.

(68)

The REDEEMER'S Ability to save
Sinners to the uttermost, illustrated.

S E R M O N II.

Sabbath, March 16th 1755.

HEBREWS vii. 25.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him.

IN the discourse delivered yesterday, there was an attempt to illustrate and confirm the ability of Jesus Christ, in the exercise of his mediatory office, to save sinners to the uttermost. Mean time, this plainly supposes, that the salvation of sinners is a very hard and difficult work, and that none but our Mediator was equal to such an undertaking. Therefore, I apprehend, it will still be pursuing the purpose of the text, if I shall condescend on some of these hindrances and difficulties which ly in the way of our salvation, and shew, as I go along, Christ's ability in the exercise of his office, to remove every one of them, and carry on the great work unto perfection. And here, all convenient brevity shall be studied, as we have been long together.

First, Some of the divine perfections stood in the way of our salvation; and this is obviously such an impediment as neither man nor angel

was able to remove. These attributes of God which put a bar in our way, are chiefly two.

1. His holiness, an attribute much celebrated in scripture. *There is none holy as the Lord*, says the good woman *Hannah*, in her song (a). The seraphims with their wings covering their faces, cry one to another, *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts* (b).

God is a spotlessly pure and holy Being, and cannot somuch as look upon iniquity but with the utmost detestation,—concerning it, he says to us with the greatest vehemence and the deepest resentment, *Oh do not that abominable thing which I hate* (c)! On the other hand, Adam's children are all as an unclean thing, the leprosy of sin has infected the whole family, the contagion has spread through the whole man, so that we cannot point at any part of us and say, This is pure and untainted.—Nay, from the crown of the head, to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness in us, but we are full of wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores. Now, how shall a holy God admit such creatures into his presence? how shall he hold communion with them? What fellowship has light with darkness, or what concord hath Christ with Belial? Sinners cannot make themselves holy; and God can have no communion with them while they are unholy: so that here is a great difficulty, a mighty impediment in the way of our salvation.

But behold, this tow'ring mountain becomes a plain, before the office-power and authority of Jesus Christ! For first, He confers upon his people an imputed righteousness, in which the cu-
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(a) 1 Sam. ii. 2. (b) Isa vi. 3. (c) Jer. xliv. 4.

rious, critical, and piercing eye of Jehovah cannot spy the least blemish. This righteousness Christ himself purchased by his being born holy, living holy, and making perfect satisfaction for sin by his death: So the sinner standing at God's bar, under the covert of this glorious robe of Immanuel's righteousness, is absolved from the guilt of sin, and declared righteous by the judge of all the earth. *For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (d).* — *He is made unto us of God—righteousness (e).* — *And this is the name wherewith he shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness (f).* Secondly, He works in them an inherent righteousness: for among other things, *He is made unto us of God, sanctification.* He is the great ordinance of God for

(d) 2 Cor. v. 21. That expression, *He was made sin for us*, is striking and astonishing. It is such a speech as would not be lawful for us to utter, if the Holy Ghost had not sanctified it unto our use. It is not said, *He was made a sinner*, but *he was made sin*. Now how could this be, but by a voluntary substitution of himself in the room of sinners, whereby their guilt was transferred upon him? Sin stands here, as in the law of Moses, for *sin-offering*. Thus it is said in Hosea iv. 8. *They set up the sin of my people, i. e. the sin-offering of my people.* The priests, in that degenerate age, were glad at the abounding of sin among the people, as it multiplied the sacrifices, in which they found their account. Further, it was God who made him to be sin. God never made a sinner, yet he made his Son to be sin, *i. e.* he made him the common receptacle or centre wherein all our sins, and the wrath due to us for them, were to meet. *He bore our sins in his own body on the tree.*

(e) 1 Cor. i. 30. (f) Jer. xxv. 6.

for sanctifying unholy sinners, as well as for justifying guilty sinners. And this sanctification be works in them by his Spirit communicated unto them, upon their union with himself as the glorious head of the new creation. Here then is a mighty performance of the Mediator, to make sinners holy, and thereby fit for communion with the holy One of *Israe*l, the thrice holy Jehovah. This is more than all the holy angels can do—they could not, out of their joint stock of holiness, spare as much to a poor sinner as would admit him one moment into the presence of God. But Jesus Christ can confer as much upon us, and work as much in us, as shall qualify us for the most intimate communion with God, both in time and through eternity.

2. His *righteousness*, which the psalmist calls *like the great mountains* (g), was a mountain, in the way of our salvation, the Mediator had to level. Vindictive Justice is essential to God, so that he cannot dismiss sin unpunished. Of this there seems to have been an universal presumption among mankind, and from thence have sprung these many inventions of sinners to appease this justice, and to conciliate the favour of the Deity.

Two things have been alledged, and much insisted on, as a sufficient atonement to justice; *the repentance of the sinner, and a return to his duty*. As to the first,—Let it be observed, that no laws, human or divine, admit of repentance as an atonement for the crimes repented of. Among men, the condemned malefactor's repentance, though most sincere and bitter, cannot

(g) Psal. xxxvi, 6.

save his life ; but he must die, to fulfil the sentence of the law, and to preserve order and good government in the world. As for God's law,—the constant invariable voice of it is, *Do, or die : The man that doth these things shall live by them ; but the soul that sinneth, it shall die.* Thus it is plain, that repentance gets admission upon the scheme of grace, and not by the law (b). For according to the law, the moment a man transgresses it, he falls under its condemnatory sentence, and there is an end of him. Whereas, believers in Christ, *being not under the law, but under grace*, there is no condemnation for them. As to a return to duty, which is the other thing alledged ; — This is a vain empty boast, proceeding from false and romantic notions of the powers of human nature in its present state. The Heathen philosophers might talk thus, who were not let into the secret of the corruption of nature, and the remedy thereof. But if we believe the bible to be the word of God, and form our notions of human nature according to the representation made of it there, we must acknowledge, that a sinner neither can, nor will of himself return unto God. *No man can come*

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(b) When it is said, that repentance gets admittance upon the scheme of grace, I do not mean, that it is admitted as the ground or meritorious cause of pardon and acceptance with God.— The righteousness of Christ apprehended by faith has this honour ; and nothing we do, can lay claim to it. Mean time, repentance is a part of the gospel scheme, and an essential part of it too ; *for except we repent, we shall all likewise perish.* Therefore a sinner must come to God through Christ in the way of faith, repentance, and evangelical obedience, if he would obtain eternal life.

unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. And you will not come unto me that ye may have life. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure (i). Further, let us suppose, the sinner should return to his duty, what is the consequence of it? would it atone for past transgressions? by no means; a man's paying the current year's rent does not discharge him of his old arrears. The present duty is due upon its own account, and can stand only for itself, not for past transgressions.

But our Mediator bare our sins in his own body on the tree, he suffered for sinners, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God (j). By virtue of a compact and agreement 'twixt the Father and the Son, there was a translation of guilt and punishment from sinners upon the Son as surety for them: he said to his Father concerning them, What they owe to thee put that to my account; I'll be cautioner for them, and I'll pay their debt to the uttermost farthing.

Secondly, The law of God was a bar in the way of our salvation. The lawgiver had said, *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die* (k). He's faithful to his word of threatening as well as to his word of promise: and therefore, since mankind have incurred the threatening, what can stop the execution of it?

Now, to remove this difficulty, I would not say, that God dispensed with his law, but rather, that he gave a more favourable interpretation of it. The sentence runs thus, *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*:—The meaning of

(i) John vi. 44. John v. 40. Phil. ii. 13.

(j) 1 Pet. ii. 24. 1 Pet. 3. 18. (k) Gen. ii. 17.

of which is, either that the sinner shall die in his own person, or that another duly qualified to be his surety, shall be admitted to die for him. The first is agreeable to the strict letter of the law, the other fulfils the spirit and intention of the law, and at the same time discovers the tender bowels of the lawgiver. Upon this plan then, our Mediator laid down his life a ransom for us. When the necks of the children of men were lying on the block, and the sword of justice lifted up to fetch down the fatal blow, the Son our Saviour most seasonably interposed, crying, *Lo I come (l)*: up your necks, O ye sons of men, behold, here's maine in the place of them! Hereupon the Father accepts the offered substitution, and cries, *Awake O sword against my shepherd, smite the shepherd (m)*, smite him down to death and to the grave.

The law, my brethren, had a threefold demand upon us, (1.) That our natures be holy. (2.) That our lives be holy, and without sin. (3.) That we satisfy for our transgression in the first *Adam*, according to the tenor of the law, *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.*

But our Redeemer, in the exercise of his mediatory office, was able to anfwer, and actually did answer all these demands of the law; *For when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law (n).* He brought a holy spotleſs human nature into the world with him; therefore says the angel unto *Mary, that holy thing which shall be born of thee*

shall be called the Son of God (o). He likewise lived a holy and righteous life in the world ; for such an high Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners (p). And then he fulfilled the minatory part of the law by his death ; For being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (q).

Thus the difficulties arising from this quarter were obviated and overcome by our Redeemer, in the exercise of his mediatory office. He did not dispense with the law, he did not abrogate or cancel it ; for it is an eternal and unalterable rule of righteousness : but he magnified it and made it honourable by his own personal and most perfect obedience to it, in his life, and in his death. And let it be observed, that the great design and purpose of the gospel of the grace of God, is to renew, to refine, and improve our natures, and to work them up at last unto a thorough conformity to the holy law, the original standard of perfection, from which we deviated in the first *Adam*.

Thirdly, Satan opposes our salvation both in its beginning and in its progress. Sinners are taken captive by him at his will : *And how shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered ?* He blinds their minds and hardens their hearts : he studies their temper and disposition, that he may find out their weak side, and he lays his snares accordingly. Upon the first appearance of converting grace, he takes the alarm, and sounds it through all his dominions : and as *Pharaoh* with his mighty men pursued

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the *Israélites* when they went out of *Egypt*; so no sooner does the soul mint to depart out of the spiritual *Egypt*, than *Satan* pursues with all his power, and with all his craft, to bring it back again.

But though *Satan* be the strong man, our Redeemer is the stronger, and able to bind him and spoil his house. He delivers his people meritoriously by his death; for the law being fulfilled, they cannot be lawfully detained in the captivity of *Satan*: and he delivers them actually by his Spirit at their conversion;—then, he girds his sword upon his thigh, makes an inroad into *Satan*'s kingdom, and brings away his chosen ones.

But *Satan* continues his opposition to this saving work in its progress on the the saints.——The serpent lyes nibbling at their heels all the way through the wilderness. He's said to walk about seeking whom he may devour: and he walks not as a pilgrim, but as a spy, observing where he may plant his batteries against us to the greatest advantage.

Now, this makes the salvation of believers very difficult work, that they have to do with a subtle and powerful adversary, that's ever and anon lying at the catch, and laying snares for them;—that has been ranging up and down the world near six thousand years, and making experiments upon mankind in their several generations:—so that the saints of the Most High are never absolutely out of danger, till they set their foot on the other side *Jordan*, on *IMMANUEL*'s lands of light, and liberty, and love, and peace, and joy unto eternity.

But O how exactly is our Redeemer suited to the circumstances of his people in this valley of tears!

tears ! For in that he hath suffered being tempted, he is able also to succour them that are tempted (r). He overcame Satan for his people upon the cross, and he'll overcome him in them, and by them, in a progressive work of sanctification. His proud and revengeful spirit shall have the cutting mortification, to be bruised under the feet of every child of God. For thus runs the promise, *And the very God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly* (s).

Courage then, believers in Jesus ! up your hearts ye sons of God ! the day of your redemption draweth nigh. Satan has many formidable names and titles ; but CHRIST has a name and title in opposition to every one of his, that will administer much comfort and joy to the tossed and tempted soul. Is Satan called *Apollyon, Abaddon*, the destroyer ? a frightful name indeed ! But Christ is called the SAVIOUR. Is he called the strong man ? Christ is called the Mighty God. Is he called the accuser ? Christ is called the Advocate. Is he called the tempter ? Christ is called the Consolation of Israel. Is he the prince of darkness ? Christ is the Sun of Righteousness.

Fourthly, The present evil world is no small difficulty in the way of our salvation. To take one out from the world that lyeth in wickedness, and bring one into the family of God, is not an easy matter : for no sooner does the sinner attempt to leave the enemy's camp, no sooner does he look God-ward, and Christ-ward, than his old companions take the alarm, and do their utmost to discourage and stifle the good motions arisen

arisen in him. But he who has begun the good work of grace in the sinner's heart, is able to carry it on and perfect it, let men or devils do their utmost to oppose it.

Now, there are two principal engines by which the world opposes the progress of believers in the ways of holiness, and retards their motion heavenwards ;—these are prosperity and adversity, its frowns and its flatteries.

The prosperity, the fawnings and flatteries of the world are destructive to sinners, and very dangerous to saints. *Solomon* says, *The prosperity of fools shall destroy them* (s). The flattering world embraces them, and strangles them, *Syren-like*, it sings them and sinks them. *Solomon* himself was almost destroyed in this manner ; therefore in his writings he does very particularly warn us of the danger we are in from this quarter.—He takes as it were reprisals upon the world, and exposes all its great, and gay, and pleasant things, as the very quintessence of vanity, and therefore unworthy the pursuit, or even the notice of creatures bound for the eternal world.

It is hard to carry a full cup even :—high places are slippery, and many have catcht a fall from them that broke all their bones. In prosperity the best are ready to turn secure, proud, and forgetful of God. The good man *Moses* was aware of the danger the *Israelites* would be in from this quarter, when they were settled in the land of *Canaan* ;—therefore he warns them in a very solemn manner, saying, *Beware, lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses and dwelt therein. And when*

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thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver
and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou
hast is multiplied: then thine heart be lifted
up, and thou forget the Lord thy God——
and thou say in thine heart, My power and the
right of my hand hath gotten me this wealth (1).
Now, if we consult the history of this people
after they were settled in the good land, both
under the judges and the kings, we'll find that
prosperity was always a dangerous season to their
souls. 'Twas then they turned cold in their de-
votions, 'twas then they turned remiss in their
morals,--and 'twas then they swerved after other
gods. Their idolatries were not the effect of
principle; the case was not that they believed
the gods made with hands were really and truly
gods;--but wantonness, levity of temper, and an
ambition to be like the neighbouring nations,
made them go a-whoring after their gods. Riches,
as one observes *, are to virtue what baggage is
to an army, 'tis necessary and convenient; yet it
always retards the march, and often endangers
the victory. The apostle speaks of one *Demas*
who had forsaken them, having loved this pre-
sent world. And *Judas*, though he had no par-
ticular quarrel at his Master that appears, yet he
betrayed him: and why? because he loved some-
thing better than him, even thirty pieces of silver.
But then, the adversity and frowns of the world
are likewise dangerous to the saints in their pro-
gress heaven-wards. As we're ready to turn for-
getful of God in prosperity, so in adversity we're
apt to fret and murmur against the Lord, and to
arraign the conduct of his providence with our
presumptuous

(1) Deut. viii. 11, 12, 13, 14. * Lord Bacon's essays.

presumptuous how's, why's, and wherefore's. Prosperity fills the church with hypocrites; adversity and persecution are often the occasion of backsliding and apostasy from the profession of the gospel.

What shall we say, my brethren? one way and another 'tis a most dangerous world we live in:—what by its smiles and its frowns,—what by its corrupt maxims, customs and examples, 'tis extremely hard to get fairly and honestly through it. For a man to be among sparks of fire with bags of gun-powder tied about his loins must be very dangerous. Who can handle pitch or tar but it will stick to their fingers? who can go among thorns and briars without being torn; or at least entangled?

Well, to get clear of the present evil world is difficult, yet not impossible; for one end of the death of Christ was to deliver his people from it: *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world (u).* Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.—Yea, Christ has already overcome the world; therefore fear not, ye who believe on his name, but be of good cheer, ye also shall overcome.

Alas! may some serious soul say;—There's no doubt of it, Christ overcame the world; but what is that to me? what security arises from thence, that I shall overcome the world? I have not the strength of Christ for the encounter;—nay, I am weak and unstable as water; I am compassed about with infirmities, both natural and moral. But know, O Christian, Jesus Christ encountered the world as your head and representative, and overcame, not for himself, but

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for

(u) Gal. i. 4.

for you : and as he has overcome the world for you, so he'll overcome it in you by the power of his grace ; *Ye shall be more than conquerors thro' him that loved you* (x). No doubt thou art weak, and quite unequal for the engagement ; but his grace shall be made sufficient for thee, and his strength perfect in thy weakness.

Firstly, The remainder of indwelling sin makes great opposition to the work of salvation in the saints. Hence we find the apostle *Paul*, long after his conversion, complaining of it, and groaning heavily under it ; *But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death* (y) ? *Israel* after the flesh had difficulties to get into *Canaan* ; but after they got possession of it, their difficulties were by no means over : the *Canaanites* were not totally expelled the land, there was still a remainder of them, which prov'd a very severe trial unto them. 'Tis not an easy matter to abandon *Satan's* camp, and enlist under the captain of salvation. But the difficulties are not over when one has past into a state of grace ; for the *Canaanites* are still in the land, and will be pricks in the eye, and thorns in the side. In the depths of sovereign wisdom, there's a remainder of indwelling sin in believers to the end of their days, which makes them, with *Paul*, to groan ; and, with old *Jacob*, to go lame and halting to their graves. There's in every saint of God, while in this world, two contrary principles, called in scripture, *the old man and the new man*,

the

(x) Rom. viii. 37. (y) Rom. viii. 23, 24.

the flesh and the spirit. Hereupon there ensues a perpetual struggle, a warfare and combat.— And in two particulars especially, it differs from all other wars.

1. In other wars there is a cessation of arms at times, and both parties enter into and rest in their winter quarters until the next campaign. Here there is no such thing, no interruption, no cessation, from the first dawnings of grace in the soul, until the consummation thereof in glory.

2. In other wars, terms of peace are at last agreed on. But here there's no possibility of capitulating. Sin and grace, the flesh and the spirit, can never compromise the matter betwixt them: therefore the combat must continue, till at length grace obtain a full and compleat victory.

But then, as in all long wars both sides share different fates; so is it in the spiritual warfare: sometimes grace is victorious and triumphant, and then corruption is kept greatly at under for a while; but anon, it rallies its broken forces, and makes a fearful uproar in the soul, in which event, though grace be not expelled, yet its lustre is ffullied, and its activity weakened: then believers complain of their corruptions, as *David* did once of his captains, *I am this day weak though anointed king, and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too strong for me.* Yea, sometimes they're ready to say as *David* did, before he came to the throne, *Surely I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul* (z.)

But Jesus Christ is, in the exercise of his mediatory office, able to compleat the salvation of his

(z) 2 Sam. iii. 39. 1 Sam. xxvii. 1.

his people, in spite of all this opposition from within. He stands bound to his Father, in the covenant of grace, for the sanctification of their natures, as well for as the justification of their persons.—He is engaged to present them unto him at last, without spot, and blameless.—The holy seed, which he has sown in their hearts by his Spirit, remaineth in them, and shall not be choked by all the weeds of corruption ; the spark of grace will not only be kept alive amidst the ocean of corruption, but it will at last dry up the ocean itself. What, my brethren ! is not Jesus Christ able to finish the good work he has so nobly begun ? He has translated you from nature to grace, how much more will he translate you from grace to glory ? Something like this, I think, *Paul* means, when he says to the *Romans*, *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son ; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life* (a). Ye have already undergone the greatest change, even a change of *the kind*, for nature and grace differ in *the kind*, and are diametrically opposite to one another, like light and darkness ; whereas grace and glory differ only in the *degree*, even as a child differs from a man at full growth. Grace is glory begun, 'tis heaven brought down to the soul : and glory is grace consummate and made perfect, 'tis the soul brought up to heaven.

Lastly, Death and the grave ly betwixt us and heaven, and so are difficulties in the way of our salvation. For *it is appointed unto all men once to die*. The antient philosophers called death a debt to nature ; they said, we paid the debt at our death, which we contracted at our

birth :

(a) Rom. v. 10.

birth: But the holy scriptures put this matter up, on another footing; they inform us, *that as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (b)*. The Jewish doctors tell us, that as soon as *Adam* eat of the forbidden tree, his head ached. This, no doubt, is a fable; but the moral of it, as I take it, is a great truth, namely, that when *Adam* broke the covenant, he at the same time brake his own constitution, and his body became subject to diseases and death. — And he has transmitted this weak, broken and mortal constitution to his posterity in their several generations unto this day. Saintship does not exem from the stroke of death, nor will grace deliver us from going down to the grave. Death lays the temples of the Holy Ghost in dust and in rubbish, as well as the synagogues of *Satan*. It disjoins the saved soul from its body, and sends the body to the grave to consume there, though it be a part of the purchase of Christ who died for the whole man.

But the gospel affords abundant consolation here, yea it puts a song of triumph over death and the grave in our mouths, while it enables us to say, *O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory (c)?*

Jesus Christ encountered death upon the cross, and overcame it, when he seemed to be overcome by it:— and he pursued the victory into death's dreadful den, the grave;— he went down there also, and having lodged there for some time, without seeing corruption, he came up again a living man, and brought away upon his shoulders

(b) Rom. v. 12. (c) 1 Cor. xv. 55.

Shoulders the gates of death. Rejoice then, and be exceeding glad, ye that are the friends of Jesus:—Death is not now that deadly thing which it would have been without a Mediator. Though it be an enemy to nature, yet it is a friend to grace, and really does more for it than all the ordinances and means of grace whatsoever; for whereas they only weaken sin by little and little, death pulls it up by the roots, and expels it utterly, and for ever. From thence it is evident that death is, next to Jesus Christ, the best friend that ever a saint saw. Neither shrink at the horrour of the grave, believers: for your dear Redeemer has gone down to it before you, and thereby perfumed and sanctified it into a bed of rest for you. And then, *he is also risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept* (d).—This secures the resurrection of your bodies at the last day, and their reunion with your souls, that so the whole man may be made partaker of the glory then to be revealed.

I shall conclude only with two reflexions on what has been said. First, *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear* (e)? If the Christian, living by faith, and in a constant course of mortification, has, after all, enough a do to get to heaven; is saved, yet so as by fire, *i. e.* with much difficulty:—What shall be the fate of the secure, slothful, careless sinner, living without God in the world? What means this temper and way of yours, *O foolish people and unwise?* do ye think to leap out of *Delilah's* lap into *Abraham's* bosom? will ye waste away a lifetime in the service

(d) 1 Cor. xv. 20. (e) 1 Pet. iv. 18.

service of sin and *Satan*, and then presume ye will get the kingdom of heaven for crying, God save me, or God have mercy on me, when ye find yourselves clasped hard in the cold arms of death ? Strange ! has not God peremptorily declared, *that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom, and that without holiness no man shall see the Lord ?* and yet ye will hope to be saved in your sins ! What an impudent, impious, and blasphemous hope is this ! It is a hope that the God of truth will be found a liar, and his Son Jesus Christ a false prophet. O ! cast away quickly this vain and vile hope,—otherwise it will sink you down to the bottomless pit, where wild despair rages for ever and ever. *Lastly,* Oh how much are we obliged to the Son of God who undertook the difficult task of saving mankind sinners ! Not the highest angel in heaven,—nay, not the whole tribe of angels with their united wisdom and power, and love and friendship, could have brought one son or daughter to glory. But *worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing (f).*

Ye have this day, been celebrating the memorial of a most important and interesting event, an event which is the foundation of all your hopes for eternity ; I mean the death of our dearest Redeemer.—Ye have been professing your deep sense of that rich grace which pays the debt of the dyver, breaks the chains of the captive, and blesses the prisoners with eternal freedom. O ! be earnest at a throne of grace, that any impressions of this sort made upon your spirits

(f) Rev. v. 12.

48.

Spirits may remain upon them; and that your goodness be not as the morning cloud, nor as the early dew which passeth away (g). Sure I am, a warm sense of redeeming love will be your strongest barrier against temptation,—the most prevailing motive to diligence and perseverance in all the duties of the Christian life,—and the most powerful incentive to praise and thanksgiving.

To conclude:—Let the redeemed of the Lord join with the beloved disciple, who lay in his master's bosom, and say, *To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen* (h).

(g) Hosea vi. 4. (h) Rev. i. 5, 6.

F I N I S.

